SENATE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (SCIT)
MINUTES OF MEETING
November 6, 2012

[In these minutes: review of IT priorities; Communities of Practice discussion; future agenda items.]

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration or the Board of Regents.]

PRESENT: David Arendale (chair), John Butler, Sean Conner, Ted Higman, Stephen Levin, Yiwen Li, Helen Lin, James MacDonald, Noel Phillips, Benton Schnabel, Yuk Sham, Tisha Turk

OTHERS ATTENDING: Christopher Cramer, Bernard Gulachek

GUESTS: Rex Wheeler, information technology manager, OIT

REGRETS: Lara Friedman-Shedlov, Tom Shield, Shashi Shekhar, Scott Studham, Mary Vavrus

ABSENT: Nolan Shen

WELCOME

Professor Arendale called the meeting to order, welcomed those present, and asked members to introduce themselves.

Professor Cramer announced that there would be an eLearning seminar titled, "eLearning: Tools and Triumphs" on Monday, November 19th at 2:00 p.m. in 402 Walter Library. It is a presentation of University resources to assist instructors and programs in the development of online or digitally enhanced coursework and curricula.

LIST OF IT INITIATIVES DISCUSSION

Professor Arendale reminded the members that Scott Studham, VP, OIT distributed this list of priorities at the October meeting. Professor Arendale asked members to review the list and ask questions or make comments.
- Professor Conner asked if the ranking was based on an existing need or is it based on future planning? If there is not a demonstrated need, how do you develop a strategy for a need that is not clearly articulated? Developing an infrastructure in advance, may not meet the needs that develop in the future.
    - Mr. Gulachek stated that the list was created to place the IT staff in a position to be responsive and support the institution's eLearning strategy when that emerges. The capacity needs to be created before the strategy is implemented. Services must be aligned and prepared to serve the faculty

in their units. They are looking to the provost's office for leadership in terms of strategy.

- o Many items in the list have come from discussion with chancellors, deans, and the entire IT community over the past year. Mr. Gulachek emphasized that he wants a more robust input process in the future. A survey was recently sent from OIT, but did not reach as many constituents as they hoped.
- o Mr. Butler stated that there is an uneven demand across colleges. Some units have been immersed in eLearning strategies for years, while others are recognizing the need and asking for assistance.
- o Professor Cramer stated that each unit has a different idea of eLearning. The needs may not be the same for each unit. There is a desire to develop a strategic vision for eLearning. IT has not had a centralized focus on eLearning and there is a greater cost to non-standardization. Research supports that blended courses that include digitally enhanced online content lead to a higher quality educational experience. As a result, the faculty has shown increasing interest in incorporating eLearning strategies into their courses.

- • Mr. Schnabel asked for clarification regarding the emphasis of referring to the initiatives as those of IT as opposed to just OIT.
    - o Mr. Gulachek responded that the focus is on aligning the management of information technologies across the campuses to create a uniform experience for the user. This is not just a list for the Office of Information Technologies; it is for all IT units on campus. The IT units should be complimentary to each other, not competitive. Administrative costs need to be reduced in a way that is logical and keeps the users in mind.
    - o Mr. Gulachek stated that the initiatives are at different stages in their development and that is why all of them have not yet been broadly communicated. For instance, the PeopleSoft upgrade is more than a year from being experienced by users.

- • Ms. Phillips asked when the Business Intelligence tool would be available.
    - o Mr. Gulachek responded that it is available and the Office of Planning and Analysis are leading the reporting capabilities. The technologists have supported the tool but they are not responsible for the way in which it is used.

COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE (COP) DISCUSSION

Rex Wheeler, information technologies manager, OIT, began by explaining that the governance model is informing the IT priorities list. The formal COP's will aid in the initiative to align all IT professionals. COP will consist IT professionals and are open to any students, staff, or faculty members that are driven to support the University community in IT matters. These groups can be formally or informally organized and will work towards achieving different IT initiatives.

There are two different types of the COP's: formal and informal.

- There are three formal COP's: eLearning, IT Risk Framework, and Consolidation of Help Desks. The IT Leadership COP will receive the inquiries and requests from the University community, which they will form into the charge statements developed for formal COP's.
  - Formal COP's will be given a charge statement, a leader, and a timeframe in which to complete the task stated in the charge. After the initial task is completed, the COP will continue to exist informally and self-manage.
    - By the end of November, a leader will be designated for each formal COP and meeting dates will be set. The formal COP will have an interim leader to determine the steering committee, which will serve as the nucleus of the group. The steering committee will take information and feedback from the community, present it to the committee, and decisions will be made henceforth. The list of IT priorities will guide the formation of some of the COP's, with exceptions of projects like the PeopleSoft upgrade.
  - There are approximately 40 groups that would be considered informal COP's and they all have listservs. These groups consist of people that have an interest, regardless of their role at the University, and seek solutions that the institution can realize. The University has a history of informal groups coming together without a charge, but still driving towards outcomes. Some examples of informal COP's include:
    - Computer Management is an informal group that has a steering committee already assigned, they meet regularly, and they continue to try to get more people involved.
    - The Help Desk Consortium may become part of a formal COP to assist with the help desk consolidation.
    - Mr. MacDonald explained that Net People is an informal COP that gave rise to Code People. It consists of people that were interested in writing code, which then formed a mailing list, and now they meet monthly to discuss best practices. The group has continued to grow in membership. He emphasized the grass roots nature of how informal COP's are formed.

A website is currently being developed that will contain information on COP's regarding:
- What COP's exist
- How to join a COP
- When COP's are meeting
- How to establish a formal or informal COP

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Professor Arendale compiled a list of topics for upcoming meetings that the members voted on via email. The items that were ranked as top priorities are:
1. OIT professional development opportunities for faculty in the forms of: help desks, online tutorials, workshops, consultations, and semester or year-length

mentorship programs. These are especially valuable when major system upgrades and new services are implemented.
2. OIT free and discounted software and computer hardware plans for students, faculty, and staff.
3. Infrastructure capacity for increased campus wireless connectivity.

Members discussed the topics and others that were not listed.
- Professor Sham pointed out that SCIT might have different priorities from OIT, but it may benefit OIT to make them aware of some of the differing issues.
- Mr. Gulachek offered to present the OIT survey summary at the next meeting to further inform the priorities of the committee and validate the topics that were chosen.
- Professor Arendale recommended that the first item be discussed in the next meeting regarding IT professional development. He would like to discuss how to make this information streamlined and easily available to interested constituents. Mr. Butler agreed that the committee could be most helpful by presenting a consolidated approach to offering professional development opportunities. Professor Cramer added that when required trainings are completed they are stored online and it would be beneficial to include optional trainings in the same location, potentially the myU Portal.
- Mr. Gulachek stated that Brian Dahlin, director, Security and Assurance, OIT, would like to present the Information Security Policies before they are presented to the Policy Advisory Committee.

Without hearing further business, Professor Arendale adjourned the meeting.

Jeannine Rich
University Senate Office